

ACEQUIA TRAIL CONNECTION: LA CIENEGUITA RD - HARRISON RD LINK

Meeting Summary

Public Involvement Meeting - Thursday, May 28, 2015

Purpose

A Public Involvement Meeting for the Acequia Trail Connection: La Cieneguita Rd to Harrison Rd Link was held on Thursday May 28, 2015. The meeting outlined the proposed trail alignment to the public and served as a venue to collect public input prior to final design and construction. The trail link consists of a ca. 200 lf trail segment on an existing easement between La Cieneguita Road and Harrison Road. Project boards with basic project information (Context Map w/ City urban trails, and a Site Plan – Proposed) were on display during the meeting. A public question and answer session followed a brief informal project introduction by the City's Project Manager.

Meeting Summary

The public involvement meeting for the Acequia Trail link was held at the Barn at Frenchy's Field on Thursday, May 28, 2015 between 5:30 and 6:30 pm. There were 20 individuals signed in, with an estimated 24 people attending. Project team members present included: City of Santa Fe (Leroy Pacheco, Project Manager), Radian Engineering (Carmen Silva, Carlos Padilla, Remy McDonald) and design office (Claudia Horn, Patrick Sinnott).

The meeting was organized as an open house (ca. 10 minutes) followed by a presentation (ca. 20 minutes), and question and answer session (ca. 30 minutes).

Leroy Pacheco briefly introduced members of the design team (Radian Engineering, design office) and provided an overview of the project's history, design parameters, and the overall objective of connectivity with the existing trails system. The project purpose is to complete a missing link as identified in the 2012 Bicycle Master Plan to improve overall urban trail system connectivity and connect an isolated piece of the Acequia Trail. The intention is to install a multi-use urban trail between the two streets with ADA curb ramps. The trail will be an 8 foot wide concrete trail within the utility right-of-way on the south side of the Acequia Madre along the existing berm. The La Cieneguita link of the Acequia Trail will include pedestrian handrails and limited landscaping. Construction for the new trail link is estimated to commence this fall. As part of a separate project the City is looking at a trail connection to Maez Road and existing trail sections further east of the La Cieneguita neighborhood.

Public Comments Summary

Public comments were collected through written comment forms, emails, and by documenting the question and answer session at the public meeting. Overall, meeting attendees responded positively to the trail connection improvements and the proposed alignment.

Primary concerns of meeting attendees included issues related to vagrants using the trail to access the park and the lack of connection to the Acequia Trail on the east side of the park. Suggestions from the public included access mitigation and improving trail linkages on the east and west sides of the La Cieneguita neighborhood.

Some of the primary issues raised by those who gave open comments were:

- questions / comments on whether or not the ponds or acequia would be disturbed.
- comments on the abundance of homeless persons and drug dealers/crime nearby that could get better access to the neighborhood.
- questions / comments about the plans for the larger Acequia Trail network beyond the immediate project site.
- questions about trail details and safety along its edges and at the trail intersection with roads.

Meeting Advertisement

The meeting was advertised according to City of Santa Fe guidelines as follows:

15 days in advance:

Email: to Santa Fe City Council, Santa Fe MPO staff, BTAC members, SF Pedestrian Master Plan working group members, interested individuals, Santa Fe Civic Housing (La Cieneguita) and neighborhood associations (city wide)

Postcards: to property owners within 300' of project boundaries, neighborhood associations within 300' of project boundary

14 days in advance:

Posters: (1) 4'x5' City of Santa Fe Notification Board at Harrison Rd. at the utility + access easement.
(1) 4'x5' City of Santa Fe Notification Board at La Cieneguita Rd. at the utility + access easement.

One week in advance:

Email: to Santa Fe City Council, Santa Fe MPO staff, BTAC members, SF Pedestrian Master Plan working group members, Acequia Madre Mayordomo, interested individuals, Santa Fe Civic Housing (La Cieneguita) and neighborhood associations (city wide)

One day in advance:

Email: to Santa Fe City Council, Santa Fe MPO staff, BTAC members, SF Pedestrian Master Plan working group members, Acequia Madre Mayordomo, interested individuals, Santa Fe Civic Housing (La Cieneguita) and neighborhood associations (city wide)

Comments + Suggestions – from the Public

Following are comments / suggestions from the public. These comments were collected in the following manner:

- Question & Answer Session (recorded during the public meeting)
- Written comments on Comment Sheets (collected on 5/28/2015)
- Email correspondence (collected until 5/29/2015)

QUESTION + ANSWER SESSION RECORD (FROM PUBLIC MEETING: May 28, 2015)

During the presentation there were concerns safety at the intersection, both pedestrian and vehicular. Members of the audience also expressed concerns about how the trail would invite non-residents (such as vagrants) into the neighborhood.

The regular text is a record of comments and questions from the public. Italicized text is a record of responses from the design team. The record is summarized, not transcribed verbatim.

Questions and Answer Session

What is average width of trails?

- Typically trails are 10' but due to constraints this will be an 8' trail. This is partially due to the existing berm being about 8' wide.

Will the pond change at all?

-No, we don't want to change the drainage of the pond, the ponds functions fine and we don't want to change the system. We do want to make the trail safe, accessible and beautiful so there may be some landscaping.

The fencing is falling down in this area and I call the City. The area needs to be secure. There are homeless in the area. There are known drug dealers in the area. I am concerned about easier access to the area.

- We are still working on the fencing look and exact locations. On the north side there is plenty of room. We also want to keep people out of ponding area. We want to put fencing where appropriate but not too close to the trail. Fencing can help to make it easier for people to hide so access mitigation is a balance.

There is a lot of crime in that area, I am concerned about access.

- Part of project is to clean up the corridor. There will be less places to hide with more pedestrian traffic in the area.

For your information, the water in the acequia at the highest is 2"-4" when it is running. A buffer between the acequia and trail would be preferred.

People drive really fast through there. It could be dangerous for bikers. I am concerned about bikes shooting out into traffic.

- There will be stop signs at the trail. There are limited amount of sidewalks in area too that pose a challenge.

Are you opening up Maez Road to the park? Are you taking the trail through the park?

- This project is just an extension between Harrison and La Cieneguita.

Eventually will you connect Maez to La Cieneguita?

- At this point it is a conceptual idea but the right-of-way connection needs to be worked out.

There is a La Cieneguita Homeowners Association covenant that calls for La Cieneguita to be inaccessible/closed off to Maez Rd. How would that work? The residents made them close off the park to Maez Rd. in that area.

- The longterm vision is to have a long trail that connects to downtown. That part of a future project would be looked at individually. It is part of the Bicycle Master Plan. There is a trails master plan for non-motorized traffic. It includes Rail Trail, Acequia, River Trail, etc. that is part of a bigger vision. It would be nice to find a solution to this in the future.

I live on Harrison just north of trail. I would use the trail. It would be nice to not have to go over the fence. It would be great to follow the trail into town. There is a fence near Otowi Dr., with utility easement that we used to be able to go through.

Some of the homeowners in that section didn't want trails in that area so a fence may have been put in.

-People seem to realize the benefit of trails and if we work with easements and right of way, people tend to see the value.

Seems like that connection between Casa Alegre is really important but it would be nice to address social problems. We want traffic in that area to reduce homelessness etc. But at this point it wouldn't be part of bigger area.

It would be nice to connect to Industrial Rd along the acequia madre. A larger connection is a huge benefit. The vacant City yards to the south could connect through to Henry Lynch Rd. Seems like for future planning, it could include this area. Connecting to the larger area is important. *- A large public process may have vetted some of these ideas in the master plan. At this point we are looking at specific projects. The MPO and planning department looked at the larger route context in the past.*

I was on the committee and it seemed like the area west of Harrison wasn't looked at.

This smaller project was very important to Tim in the Bicycle Master Plan because these small connections provide access to roads like Rufina which is a very friendly road as a bike route. The Bike Master Plan is on line if you want to look at it.

It seems with growth in the Siler Rd. area, ideas of greater connection is very important to reducing unwanted loiterers and crime in the area.

What is the point of making this small connection if you don't do the east connection?

- Connecting to the south and cross routes to other systems is important too. This project helps connect trail to trail and to other bikeways. The bigger picture is not stopping the momentum and building what you can. It is a small piece of the puzzle but it is an important piece. Connections in other directions are important. Small pieces at a time are important.

People use Harrison Rd. I don't think people will use the trail.

- We have discovered that when more connections are built within an area, such as the Acequia Trail near Osage, that people within the neighborhood use it more and they find that it is easier to connect to larger system. It's a step.

Are you doing any lighting near the pond?

- We will look at lighting. Street lights may be appropriate. There will be a pedestrian rail along each side of the trail for safety.

Will it be striped?

- Generally the trail systems are not striped. Otowi is striped. This area is very straight. If there is a reason to stripe this section as we go along we can look at it.

At the berm is there a fence?

- There will be a pedestrian pipe rail on the trail's edge. We hope to make it an attractive space.

Are you going to beautify the park?

- Not as a part of this project. But I believe there are upgrades planned for the future.

Will there be bollards? I find them dangerous.

- Not necessarily. Since it is 8' trail, as long as a vehicle can't get through it would work.

Small insets can be dangerous when bollards are removed.

- We will follow national standards for bollard use on trails and consider them only if needed.

I would like to encourage you to make that connection to Maez Rd.

- It would be easier if there were an easement. It will be looked at in the future.

There is a culvert from Maez Rd. into the acequia. It is open at the park in the acequia. There may be room on the south side.

We are having problems in the park with drugs and homeless. People come down La Cieneguita from Cerrillos. I saw two people today. We've had a lot of problems in the park and we've had a poor response from the City. We have trouble with infrastructure, such as speed bumps that may need to be removed for fire access. I understand that you want to have a good trail system. I use the system. I don't see this little piece making much of a difference, for me. I think Maez Rd. connection would provide more of an access of unwanted individuals. We've had to control the situation ourselves.

- 10 years ago the Rail Trail and the Rail Station had some of the worst homeless problems. You put the trail in and people move. Now there is less of a problem.

One of the last trails I worked on was Acequia trail behind the School for the Deaf. It was overgrown and there were loiterers. People were hesitant. Now it is more open, more people, and there is now less of a problem. It is hard for neighbors to adjust sometimes. But we have found that neighbors love it and your initial skepticism is understood. Although the value isn't readily understood, the larger connections will help.

Behind the Indian School there were encampments, a village in Ashbaugh Park. Once the trail has come in they have gone away. They don't want to be around the trail.

The homeless shelter is just down the street. They come down Harrison Rd. to the park.
- We have a homeless problem is Santa Fe. There was a homeless shelter near Indian School too.

It is different when you live near it.

I am a senior planner for the City, Judy Montoya is a new community relations officer. And I am happy to organize a meeting because it is a larger problem than just a small trail connection. We can organize a meeting with Police, the shelter, etc. I can give my contact information after the meeting.

Thank you for any extension with the Acequia Trail. I live near Siler and it is dangerous to bike so any improvement is welcomed. There are shady areas but trails help. Southern exposure trails are great because then the trails thaw from ice in the winter. Locate the trail on the north side of the acequia, if possible.

We have 2 State Police that live in the area. If they are not responding please call the neighborhood office because it is part of their responsibility. Call the Housing Authority. I am (Amy Martinez) happy to give you my contact information.

SUGGESTIONS FROM COMMENT BOX

Written comments collected on or after the meeting on comment sheets are as follows:

1. none

SUGGESTIONS FROM EMAILS

Written comments collected on or after the meeting by email are as follows:

1. Hi, I'm William Mee of the Traditional Historic Community of Agua Fria Village and President of the Agua Fria Village Association and Acequia Agua Fria. I see no real objections to the proposed trail. In Agua Fria, we are very supportive of both our Santa Fe River Trail and Greenway proposed by Santa Fe County. A new element has arisen and that is of Eco-Tourism and how people in our area might take advantage of those business opportunities: bike shop, snack & drink stand, historical tours, exposure of trailside businesses and arts & crafts, etc. (Colleen Baker of SF County Open Space and Trails commissioned a dissertation of this). We also think that the trails can become a part of our neighborhood watch strategy. One thing to be aware of is the possible interference with the acequia system and operations (? don't know what that would be; maybe kids damming up the acequia, littering, etc.). But maybe it can forge a partnership between the recreational users and the Acequia Association which often has a dwindling acequia cleaning crew. More timely eyes on flood damage, invasive tree growth, and vandalism; can only seem to be a positive.

Perhaps you can also involve Phil Bove the Mayordomo of the Upper Canyon acequia and President of the Santa Fe River Regional Acequia Association. Rick Martinez, of the Santa Fe Neighborhood Network, can maybe contact him (CC above). Thanks.

2. Leroy,
Good meeting.

I have attached a marked drawing showing extending the arched 36" culvert (29"X42") to approx. sta. 10+48 to reduce conflict with the trail and to remove the dog-leg turn that exists today. This would put hard structure over a small portion of the existing sanitary sewer line (approximately 10 feet). As I noted to you that the plan sheet 2-2 calls for replacing the existing culverts with 2 - 36" dia. culverts. Only one culvert is required as was originally designed on both the Harrison Road paving drawings and the Maes Road storm water drawings.

The existing access gates to the acequia and the ponds on La Cienegitas need to be replaced with sturdier material. A fence e/w a manway gate might be helpful in limiting access to the acequia and on through to the ponds at the Harrison road end. The ponds are still a concern since they don't percolate well even with the grated drains to the storm drain since the grates can become clogged with debris. The City fenced the ponds early on when it was discovered that they didn't percolate well.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this in more detail.

Thanks,
Phil
Phillip J. Bové, Commissioner
Acequia Madre de Santa Fe

END OF NOTES